

honored Mr. Moore with the dedication of the "Ralph Moore Miniature Rose Garden Memorial Park."

Ralph Moore is part of the rich heritage that makes Visalia and the entire Central Valley of California an enjoyable and interesting place to live.

I sincerely wish Ralph Moore a wonderful 100th birthday.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, on roll-call No. 12; on motion to recommit (H. Res. 35). Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

#### RECOGNIZING JOEY M. SAUNDERS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

### HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Joey Saunders, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 357, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Joey has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Joey has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. It is with extreme pleasure that I commend the dedication Joey has shown.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Joey for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am proud to represent Joey in the U.S. House of Representatives.

#### TRIBUTE TO GARY FRONTIERS SERVICE CLUB

### HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, as we celebrate the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and reflect on his life and work, we are reminded of the challenges that democracy poses to us and the delicate nature of liberty. Dr. King's life, and, unfortunately, his untimely death, reminds us that we must continually work to secure and protect our freedoms. Dr. King, in his courage to act, his willingness to meet challenges, and his ability to achieve, embodied all that is good and true in the battle for liberty.

The spirit of Dr. King lives on in the citizens of communities throughout our Nation. It lives

on in the people whose actions reflect the spirit of resolve and achievement that will help move our country into the future. In particular, several distinguished individuals from Indiana's First Congressional District will be recognized during the 28th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast on Monday, January 15, 2007, at the Genesis Convention Center in Gary, Indiana. The Gary Frontiers Service Club, which was founded in 1952, sponsors this annual breakfast.

This year, the Gary Frontiers Club will pay tribute to several local individuals who have for decades unselfishly contributed to improving the human condition of others in the City of Gary. Those individuals who will be recognized as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Marchers at this year's breakfast include: Barbara Cope, the late Reverend Hezekiah Stewart Malone, Jr., Roy Pratt, and Finis Springer. Additionally, Maurice John Preston, Sr. will be honored with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major Award, an award given out annually to an outstanding individual of the Gary community.

Though very different in nature, the achievements of all of these individuals reflect many of the same attributes that Dr. King possessed, as well as the values he advocated. Like Dr. King, these individuals saw challenges and rose to the occasion. Each one of the honored guests' greatness has been found in their willingness to serve with a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love. They set goals and worked to achieve them.

Madam Speaker, I urge you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending the Gary Frontiers Service Club president, Mr. Oliver J. Gilliam, breakfast chairman, Mr. Clorius L. Lay, and all other members of the service club for their initiative, determination, and dedication to making Northwest Indiana a better place for all who live and work there.

#### FIRST, DO LESS HARM IN MEDICARE

### HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, as we vote later this week on negotiating better prices for Part D drugs in Medicare, we must remember that the debate is about much more than prescription drugs. Requiring the Secretary to negotiate for lower drug prices is just one small step in the fight against Medicare privatization and the conservative push to end the Medicare entitlement.

Madam Speaker, I ask that the Paul Krugman Op-Ed from the January 5, 2007, edition of the New York Times be printed in the RECORD.

#### FIRST, DO LESS HARM

(By Paul Krugman)

Universal health care, much as we need it, won't happen until there's a change of management in the White House. In the meantime, however, Congress can take an important step toward making our health care system less wasteful, by fixing the Medicare Middleman Multiplication Act of 2003.

Officially, of course, it was the Medicare Modernization Act. But as we learned during the debate over Social Security, in Bushspeak "modernize" is a synonym for

"privatize." And one of the main features of the legislation was an effort to bring private-sector fragmentation and inefficiency to one of America's most important public programs.

The process actually started in the 1990s, when Medicare began allowing recipients to replace traditional Medicare—in which the government pays doctors and hospitals—with private managed-care plans, in which the government pays a fee to an H.M.O. The magic of the marketplace was supposed to cut Medicare's costs.

The plan backfired. H.M.O.'s received fees reflecting the medical costs of the average Medicare recipient, but to maximize profits they selectively enrolled only healthier seniors, leaving sicker, more expensive people in traditional Medicare. Once Medicare became aware of this cream-skimming and started adjusting payments to reflect beneficiaries' health, the H.M.O.'s began dropping out: their extra layer of bureaucracy meant that they had higher costs than traditional Medicare and couldn't compete on a financially fair basis.

That should have been the end of the story. But for the Bush administration and its Congressional allies, privatization isn't a way to deliver better government services—it's an end in itself. So the 2003 legislation increased payments to Medicare-supported H.M.O.'s, which were renamed Medicare Advantage plans. These plans are now heavily subsidized.

According to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, an independent federal body that advises Congress on Medicare issues, Medicare Advantage now costs 11 percent more per beneficiary than traditional Medicare. According to the Commonwealth Fund, which has a similar estimate of the excess cost, the subsidy to private H.M.O.'s cost Medicare \$5.4 billion in 2005.

The inability of private middlemen to win a fair competition against traditional Medicare was embarrassing to those who sing the praises of privatization. Maybe that's why the Bush administration made sure that there is no competition at all in Part D, the drug program. There's no traditional Medicare version of Part D, in which the government pays drug costs directly. Instead, the elderly must get coverage from a private insurance company, which then receives a government subsidy.

As a result, Part D is highly confusing. It's also needlessly expensive, for two reasons: the insurance companies add an extra layer of bureaucracy, and they have limited ability to bargain with drug companies for lower prices (and Medicare is prohibited from bargaining on their behalf). One indicator of how much Medicare is overspending is the sharp rise in prices paid by millions of low-income seniors whose drug coverage has been switched from Medicaid, which doesn't rely on middlemen and does bargain over prices, to the new Medicare program.

The costs imposed on Medicare by gratuitous privatization are almost certainly higher than the cost of providing health insurance to the eight million children in the United States who lack coverage. But recent news analyses have suggested that Democrats may not be able to guarantee coverage to all children because this would conflict with their pledge to be fiscally responsible. Isn't it strange how fiscal responsibility is a big concern when Congress is trying to help children, but a nonissue when Congress is subsidizing drug and insurance companies?

What should Congress do? The new Democratic majority is poised to reduce drug prices by allowing—and, probably, requiring—Medicare to negotiate prices on behalf of the private drug plans. But it should go further, and force Medicare to offer direct